

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1826

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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FOR AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, EAGR, PO

SUBJ: COMMUNIST PARTY SPONSORS AGRARIAN MEETINGS

REF: (A) LISBON 699 (NOTAL)

(B) LISBON 788 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) CONTINUES TO
STRESS "AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS" AS A CAMPAIGN ISSUE IN MEETINGS

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HELD IN BOTH THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

PCP-SPONSORED MEETING IN THE SOUTH CALLED FOR AGRARIAN REFORM AND EXPROPRIATION, THEMES SUPPORTED BY LANDLESS FARM LABOR AND THE RURAL UNEMPLOYED. PCP PROGRAM IN NORTH RECOGNIZES PREDOMINANCE THERE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE, OWNER-OPERATED FARMERS AND EMPHASIZES THE NEED FOR FARMER ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIAL BENEFITS, AND HIGHER COMMODITY PRICES WHILE AVOIDING THE QUESTION OF EXPROPRIATION. END SUMMARY.

1. PCP SPONSORED MEETING IN OPORTO ON FEBRUARY 16, AIMED TOWARD THE SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMER, STRESSED FORMATION OF SMALL FARMER ASSOCIATIONS, PRICES AND MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, NEED TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, AND SOCIAL BENEFITS. REPORTEDLY SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE IN ATTENDANCE.

2. SPEECHES WERE MADE BY ALVARO CUNHAL, PCP SECRETARY-GENERAL, AND AGOSTINHO LOPES, COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE PCP'S NORTHERN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. ALVARO CUNHAL CALLED FOR FARMERS TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON PROBLEMS AFFECTING THEM AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS. REFERRING TO THE RESOLUTIONS APPROVED BY THE FIRST PCP SPONSORED MEETING (REF. B) CUNHAL ANNOUNCED THAT LEGISLATION WILL BE PASSED SHORTLY TO RESOLVE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS DISCUSSED. HE CLAIMED THAT MOST QUESTIONS RELATING TO LAND LEASES AND PRICES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF THE SMALL FARMER.

3. FIVE WORK GROUPS WERE FORMED TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- (A) APPEAL TO ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) TO CARRY OUT INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN TO FORM SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMER ASSOCIATIONS.
- (B) ASSURANCES OF GUARANTEED PRICES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMERS.
- (C) MARKETING OF PRODUCE UNDER IMPROVED CONDITIONS.
- (D) INVIGORATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES.
- (E) MANDATORY RENTAL OF IDLE OR POORLY FARMED LAND.
- (F) RENTS SHOULD BE FOR FIXED SUMS AND IN CASH.
- (G) SUB-LEASING SHOULD BE PROHIBITED.
- (H) NO DIFFERENCES SHOULD EXIST BETWEEN FARMERS AND FARM WORKERS IN REGARD TO MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS.

4. RESOLUTION PASSED CALLING FOR CREATING OF SEPARATE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE TO CARRY OUT 3 FUNCTIONS:
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- (A) PROMOTE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS:
- (B) PRODUCTION SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND FORESTRY, AND
- (C) AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

RESOLUTION ALSO CALLED FOR AN INDEPENDENT DEPARTMENT WITHIN THE MINISTRY TO SUPPORT COOPERATIVES. EACH REGIONAL DISTRICT SHOULD HAVE A COLLECTIVE AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM (A) DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENTS

(MARKETING, PRODUCTION, AND RESEARCH); (B) WORKERS WITHIN THESE DEPARTMENTS; (C) SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMER ASSOCIATIONS; AND (D) FARM WORKERS. THIS ORGANIZATION WOULD MEET PERIODICALLY TO COORDINATE ALL WORK AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WORK PROGRAM ESTABLISHED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

5. PCP-SPONSORED A MEETING OF SMALL FARMERS HELD IN SOUTHERN TOWN OF BEJA ON FEB. 16. MEETING ALSO OPEN TO FOLLOWERS OF OTHER PARTIES AND OVER 1,000 PEOPLE REPORTEDLY WERE IN ATTENDANCE. RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED CALLING FOR:

- (A) THE STRENGTHENING OF THE SMALL FARMERS LEAGUE (LIGA DOS PEQUENOS AGRICULTORES--LPA);
- (B) COOPERATION BETWEEN THE LPA AND THE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION;
- (C) IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS;
- (D) BETTER CONDITIONS FOR MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS;
- (E) THE EXPROPRIATION OF IDLE LANDS FOR THE CREATION OF COLLECTIVE FARMS RUN BY THE STATE.

COMMENT: PCP IS EXPECTED TO STEP UP ITS AGRARIAN CAMPAIGN AND RELATED ACTIVITIES IN COMING WEEKS. LOCAL PRESS GAVE BOTH MEETINGS EXTENSIVE COVERAGE.
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